

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Stephen Mordfin
^{JLS}
Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director Development Review & Historic Preservation

DATE: October 27, 2021

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case 12-15C, Waiver of Rules for Late Submittal of a Report pertaining to a campus plan amendment and time extension for the Gallaudet University

The attached report concerning Zoning Commission Case 12-15C is being submitted less than 10 days prior to the Zoning Commission's public hearing. The Office of Planning respectfully requests that the Commission waive its rule and accept this report into the record.

JS/sjm
Case Manager: Stephen J. Mordfin

MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission

FROM: Stephen J. Mordfin, Development Review Specialist
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Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review and Historic Preservation

DATE: October 27, 2021

SUBJECT: Zoning Commission Case No. 12-15C: Gallaudet University Campus Plan Amendment and Time Extension

I. SUMMARY APPLICATION

Pursuant to Subtitle X § 101, the applicant requests a special exception approval for two campus plan amendments to the approved Gallaudet University 2022 Master Plan, adopted in 2012. Those amendments are:

1. Removal of 5,997 square feet (Square 3593, part of Lot 6) from the campus of the university; and
2. Approval of a five-year time extension for the expiration of the current campus plan, from December 31, 2021 to December 31, 2026.

The applicant included three other items in the submission that, although proposed to be located on the campus, do not require approval of a campus plan amendment because no buildings or new building square footage would be involved. These items are proposed as off-site amenities for the adjacent PUD, ZC 15-24B (Union Market), also scheduled to be heard by the Commission today. Those items are:

1. Reconfiguration of Tapscott Street, a service road within the campus providing a vehicular connection to 6th Street, N.E.;
2. Establishment of a promenade, “Creativity Way,” along the western edge of the campus near 6th Street, N.E. and to the rear of the historic faculty houses, to function as a gathering and activity space for the university and the public; and
3. Installation of a memorial garden on the campus to commemorate the Black Deaf Experience as it relates to the history of the university, to be dedicated as the “Louise B. Miller Pathways and Garden”. This was not included in the campus plan and provided as an information item.

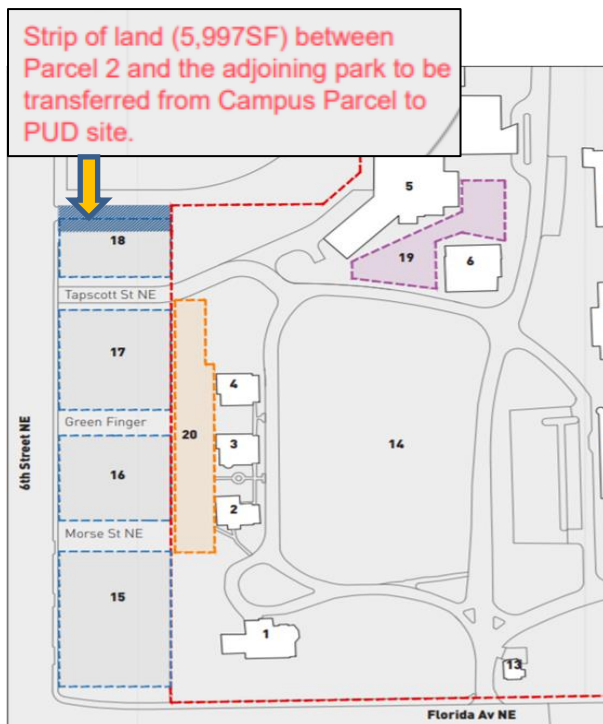
II. APPLICATION IN BRIEF

Applicant	Gallaudet University
Location	800 Florida Avenue, N.E.
Property Size	93 acres
Zoning	RF-1
Historic District	Gallaudet College Historic District
Existing Use of Property	University; land to be removed is service road access into the campus from 6 th Street, N.E. (Tapscott Street)
Comprehensive Plan Policy Map	Institutional Uses
Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map	Institutional Uses
Application	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removal of 5,997 square feet from the campus plan 2. Extension of the expiration of the campus plan from December 31, 2021 to December 31, 2026

III. ANALYSIS OF CAMPUS PLAN AMENDMENTS

1. Removal of 5,997 square feet (Square 3593, part of Lot 6) from the Campus Plan

The University requests approval to remove approximately 6,000 square feet of land along the westernmost portion of the Property, adjacent to the 6th Street PUD, from the Campus Plan.



The Gallaudet University campus consists of approximately 93 acres of land, with an approved FAR of 0.64, less than the maximum of 1.8 permitted. Although the reduction of acreage would alter the FAR, due to the small size of the parcel proposed for removal from the campus and the large size of the campus, the impact of the removal would increase the FAR of the campus by approximately 0.1 percent.

This square footage proposed for removal from the plan is identified in the plan as being located in the “6th Street Area.” This area is described as an *underdeveloped campus/urban edge with industrial uses and character.*” The plan goes on to discuss how there are several issues that prevent the campus from benefiting from its adjacent location to the Florida Avenue Market, and how the 90-foot width of 6th Street creates a barrier between the two.

The portion of land proposed for removal is currently developed as a service road for the University, providing access into the campus from 6th Street, N.E. The adjacent PUD, into which Tapscott Street would be absorbed, would be reconstructed and align with the proposed reconstruction and relocation of Tapscott Street, as proposed by the PUD.

A goal of the current campus plan is “*addressing the needs of the university community while projecting the image and spirit of Gallaudet beyond the confines of the campus proper.*” Removal of the proposed 5,997 square feet from the campus plan would facilitate the development of off-site amenities proposed by the Union Market PUD, while advancing goals of the campus plan.

OP supports the applicant’s request to remove the 5,997 square feet from the campus plan.

2. Approval of a five-year time extension for the expiration of the current campus plan, from December 31, 2021 to December 31, 2026.

The applicant requests an extension to expiration date of the Campus Plan for a period of five years, to December 31, 2026. Due to the pandemic the university has been unable to move forward on development proposals. OP recommends approval of this request.

Section X—101.11 states that:

In reviewing and deciding a campus plan application or new building construction pursuant to a campus plan, the Zoning Commission shall consider, to the extent they are relevant, the policies of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The following analysis focuses on the requested amendment to remove 5,997 square feet from the approved campus plan.

IV. THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Racial equity is an important consideration in the updated Comprehensive Plan. Racial equity is a broad and encompassing goal of the entire District government. As explained in the Framework Element of the Comprehensive Plan,

[t]he District seeks to create and support an equitable and inclusive city. Like resilience, equity is both an outcome and a process. Equity exists where all people share equal rights, access, choice, opportunities, and outcomes, regardless of characteristics such as race, class, or gender. Equity is achieved by targeted actions and investments to meet residents where they are, to create equitable opportunities. Equity is not the same as equality. 213.6

Particularly relevant is Section 2501.7 of the Implementation Element’s call for “*the Zoning Commission to evaluate all actions through a racial equity lens as part of its Comprehensive Plan consistency analysis.*”

The proposal to remove a small portion of the campus from the campus plan will facilitate the redevelopment of that portion of the campus and the east side of 6th Street with a development meant to

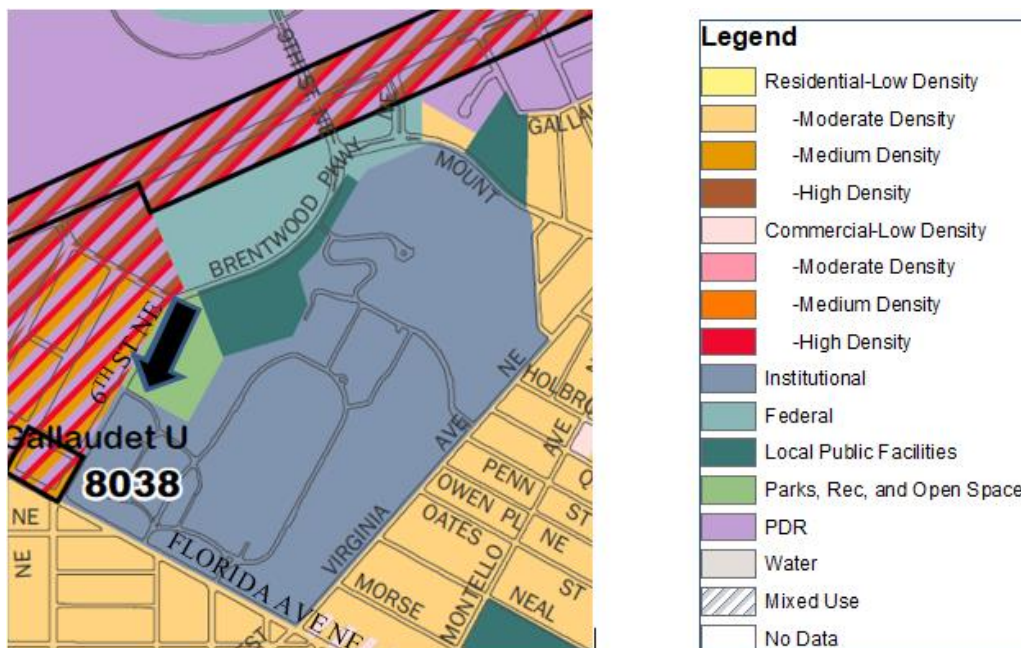
bridge the gap between the campus and the commercial uses west of Gallaudet. As an area proposed to be designed to both bring the community into the campus and provide access from the campus into the surrounding community, including the infrastructure improvements necessary to bring about the open space, or “Creativity Way,” this proposal would give all residents, from all economic, racial and social backgrounds, access to the campus. Similarly, bridging the gap between the surrounding community and the University would serve to help to end the exclusion of the residents from the campus, while similarly giving students and faculty access to the surrounding community.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAPS

As described in the Guidelines for Using the Generalized Policy Map and the Future Land Use Map (Chapter 2 Framework Element, Section 226, Attachment III), the maps are intended to provide generalized guidelines for development decisions. They are to be interpreted in conjunction with relevant written goals, policies and action items in the Comprehensive Plan text, and further balanced against policies or objectives contained in relevant Small Area Plans and other citywide or area plans.

Generalized Future Land Use Map (FLUM)

The Future Land Use Map (FLUM) indicates that the site is appropriate for institutional uses.

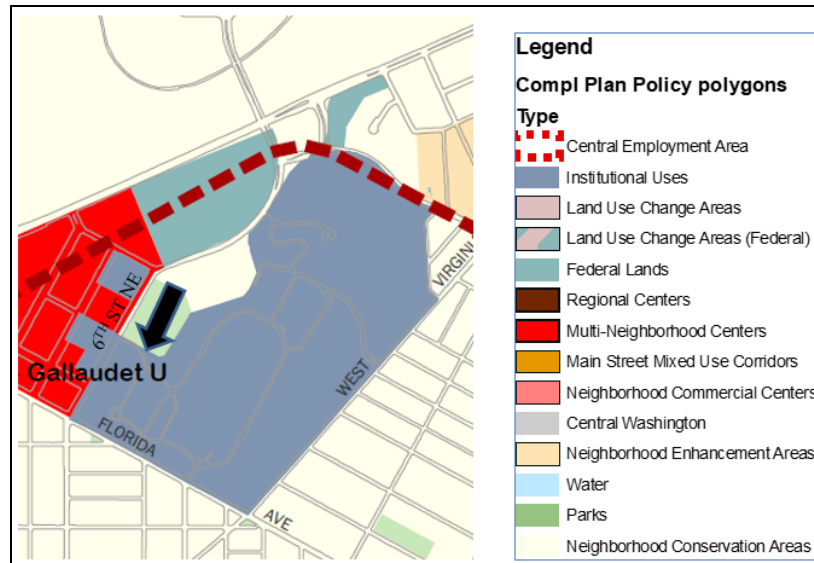


Institutional Land Use Category: “Includes land and facilities occupied and used by colleges and universities, large private schools, hospitals, religious organizations, and similar institutions. While included in this category, smaller institutional uses such as churches are generally not mapped, unless they are located on sites that are several acres in size.”

Although the application proposes to remove a parcel of land from the campus plan, it will still function in support of the university. Access to the university would still be provided for service vehicles, while allowing for the development of an open area for use by students and faculty, in addition to the surrounding community.

Generalized Policy Map

The Generalized Policy Map indicates that the site is appropriate for institutional uses.



Institutional Uses: “Much of the land identified as institutional on the map represents colleges and universities; change and infill can be expected on each campus consistent with campus plans. Other institutional sites, including hospitals and religious orders, likewise may see new buildings or facilities added. Policies in the Land Use and the Educational Facilities Elements address the compatibility of such uses with surrounding neighborhoods.”

The proposal would advance the development of an open space area that would be open to students and faculty of Gallaudet University, an institutional use, improving the resources available to the university. It would also make available resources of the university to the general public, and continue to serve the needs of the campus.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN WRITTEN ELEMENTS

Citywide Elements of the Comprehensive Plan

The proposed Campus Plan amendment is generally consistent with the approved Campus Plan and following policies of the Citywide Elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

Chapter 3 Land Use

The Land Use Chapter provides the general policy guidance on land use issues across the District.

311.5 Policy LU-2.2.4: Neighborhood Beautification

Encourage projects that improve the visual quality of neighborhoods, including landscaping and tree planting, facade improvement, anti-litter campaigns, graffiti removal, murals, improvement or removal of abandoned buildings, street and sidewalk repair, park improvements, and public realm enhancements and activations. 311.5

312.7 Policy LU-2.3.5: Institutional Uses

Recognize the importance of institutional uses, such as private schools, childcare facilities, hospitals, churches, and similar uses, to the economy, character, history, livability, and future of Washington, DC and its residents. Ensure that when such uses are permitted in residential neighborhoods, their design and operation is sensitive to neighborhood issues and neighbors' quality of life. Encourage institutions and neighborhoods to work proactively to address issues, such as transportation and parking, hours of operation, outside use of facilities, and facility expansion. 312.7

317.9 Policy LU-3.3.3: Nonprofits, Private Schools, and Service Organizations

Plan, design, and manage large nonprofits, service organizations, private schools, seminaries, colleges and universities, and other institutional uses that occupy large sites within residential areas in a way that minimizes objectionable impacts on adjacent communities. Expansion of these areas should not be permitted if the quality of life in adjacent residential areas is significantly adversely impacted. 317.9

The 5,997 square feet proposed to be removed from the campus plan is currently located within an area proposed for development as a PUD, Case 15-24B, and contains no buildings or square footage dedicated to educational uses.

The amendment results from the relocation and realignment of a portion of Tapscott Street, a gated private road accessing the campus from 6th Street, NE, in order to better align and integrate the campus entrance with the adjacent development, as was contemplated as part of the PUD approval.

Its inclusion into the adjacent PUD would help to bridge the gap between the commercial activities along 6th Street and to the west with the institutional and educational uses of the university, providing for a space where the two uses can merge and meld.

This redesigned area would provide a transition area between the university and adjacent commercial uses, visually improving appearance of the development along 6th Street and improving the intersection of 6th Street and Tapscott Street, NE.

Chapter 9 Urban Design

The Urban Design Element addresses the District's physical design and visual qualities.

911.2 Policy UD-2.4.1: Inclusive and Diverse Neighborhood Spaces

Provide for neighborhood spaces that support a diverse array of users, particularly spaces that can be designed and inhabited by people who have typically been marginalized. Inclusive neighborhood spaces should be designed to enable social interaction among neighbors and to allow for community and cultural expression as the community's needs evolve. These spaces should be inclusive for racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ populations, women, persons with disabilities, older adults, youth, immigrants/refugees, and pregnant women. 911.2

913.8 Policy UD-3.1.1: Freely Accessible Public Space

All people, including communities of color, all ages, LGBTQ+ populations and people with disabilities, should have the ability to enjoy public life, express their culture, and feel safe in public space. There should be low barriers for peaceful assembly and free expression in existing public spaces, and new and existing public space design should be accessible, welcoming, and support a mix of activities and users.

913.8
The campus plan amendment to remove approximately 6,000 square feet from the plan would not affect the efforts of the adjacent PUD to move forward with a design to create safe open space between the Florida Avenue Market and the Gallaudet University campus that would be available to a mix of users.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

On balance, the proposal to remove 5,997 square feet from the campus would improve connectivity between the Gallaudet University campus, the developing Union Market PUD and the surrounding residential communities to the advantage of all that wishing to take advantage. Therefore, OP recommends the Commission grant the request to remove the small piece of land from the campus plan and to extend the approval of the campus plan for an additional five years.

JLS/sjm